



Communitarian tourism and favela tour as expressions of the new dynamics of tourism consumption

Turismo comunitário e favela-tour como expressões das novas dinâmicas do consumo turístico

Turismo comunitario y favela-tour como expresiones de las nuevas dinámicas del consumo turístico

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Abstract

This paper deals with the relationship between tourism and poverty - processes originated by the development of industrial capitalism -, more precisely the process in which the landscape of poverty becomes a tourist commodity. The emergence of mass tourism on the model of Fordist production occurred through the 'commodification' of tourism, i.e. the creation of tourist commodity, embodied in tour packages and offering standardized hospitality. However, the Fordist hegemony has opened space for new dynamics of tourism, inserted in liquid modernity or post-Fordist, which appear to be linked to the search of belonging, security and authenticity, outside of packages and international brand hotels. Thus, there are new demands of tourist experiences, such as those in urban poor and environmentally degraded, like the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. Tourism, in fact, sells landscapes, however favela tour is different, because the landscape is attractive for its poverty and environmental degradation. This paper addresses two of these new forms of tourism consumption that occur in the environment of slums: community tourism and well known practice of favela tours. The first refers to communities that are organized to host tourists, the second refers to the practice as tours in favelas of Rio de Janeiro and has no direct link with the local community. The main objective of this paper is to discuss the existence of two different types of tourism that occur in favelas, showing their main differences and their relationship with the local community and its environment.

Keywords: tourism; consumption; community; favela tour.

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Resumo

O artigo trata das relações entre turismo e pobreza, processos originados pelo desenvolvimento do capitalismo industrial, mais precisamente do processo em que a paisagem da pobreza se torna mercadoria turística. O surgimento do turismo de massa, nos moldes da produção fordista se deu através da ‘commodificação’ do turismo, ou seja, a criação das mercadorias turísticas, consubstanciadas nos pacotes turísticos e na oferta de hotelaria padronizada. No entanto, o modelo fordista hegemônico vem abrindo espaço para novas dinâmicas de turismo, inseridas na modernidade líquida ou pós-fordista, que parecem estar ligadas à busca de pertencimento, segurança e autenticidade, fora dos pacotes e dos hotéis de bandeira internacional. Assim, surgem novas demandas de experiências turísticas, como aquelas em espaços urbanos pobres e ambientalmente degradados, como as favelas do Rio de Janeiro. O turismo, de fato, comercializa as paisagens, entretanto o turismo em favelas se diferencia, pois a paisagem não é atrativa pela sua pobreza e degradação ambiental. Este trabalho aborda duas destas formas novas de consumo turístico que se dão no ambiente de favelas: o turismo comunitário e o chamado favela-tour. O primeiro se refere a comunidades que se organizam para receber turistas, o segundo se refere à prática conhecida de tours em favelas do Rio de Janeiro e que não tem ligação direta com a comunidade local. O objetivo principal deste artigo é debater a existência de dois diferentes tipos de turismo que se dão no espaço-favela, mostrando suas diferenças principais e sua relação com a comunidade autóctone e seu ambiente.

Palavras-chave: turismo; consumo; comunidade; favela-tour.

Resumen

El artículo trata de la relación entre los procesos del turismo y la pobreza originadas por el desarrollo del capitalismo industrial, con mayor precisión el proceso en el que el paisaje de la pobreza se convierte en mercancía turística. La aparición del turismo de masas en el modelo de producción fordista se produjo a través de la “commodificación” del turismo, es decir, la creación de productos turísticos, encarnada en los paquetes turísticos y ofreciendo hospitalidad estandarizado. Sin embargo, la hegemonía fordista ha abierto espacio para nuevas dinámicas del turismo, insertado en la modernidad líquida o post-fordista, que parece estar relacionado con la búsqueda de pertenencia, seguridad y autenticidad fuera de los paquetes y hoteles de marcas internacionales. Por lo tanto, hay nuevas demandas de experiencias turísticas, como aquellas de los espacios urbanos pobres y ambientalmente degradados, como las favelas de Río de Janeiro. Turismo, de hecho, vende en los mercados las paisajes, sin embargo, el favela tour es diferente, ya que el paisaje es atractivo por su pobreza y la degradación ambiental. Este artículo aborda dos de estas nuevas formas de consumo turístico que se producen en las favelas: el turismo comunitario y el favela tour. El primer se refiere a las comunidades que se organizan para dar la bienvenida a los turistas, el segundo se refiere a La conocida práctica de giras en las favelas de Río de Janeiro y no tiene relación directa con la comunidad local. El objetivo principal de este artículo es discutir la existencia de dos tipos de turismo que se producen en el espacio-favela, mostrando sus principales diferencias y su relación con la comunidad local y su entorno.

Palabras clave: turismo; consumo; comunidad; favela tour.

1. Introduction

It is known that the phenomenon known as Grand Tour refers to trips made by children of European aristocracy and their tutors, which existed from the 16th century and lasted till 1798 with the French Revolution, whose goal was for the dominant social class sending their children abroad to prepare them for the political and intellectual command (CORIOLANO, 2006, p. 22). However, even in historical perspective, tourism as we know today was born in the year of 1841 in England, as many authors point out and recall. This is the troubled period of the birth of industrial capitalism, in which numerous social changes occurred, which later culminated in the progressive capitalist production hegemony. In this period, Engels ([1844] 2008), contextualizing the situation of the working class in England, comments on the deplorable state of poverty to which they were subjected. It is in this period that poverty arises as a social matter inherent to capitalism and related directly to hunger and misery. The activity of tourism along the lines as we know today was born of the same process that creates poverty also as we know it. This process is the emergence, development and hegemony of industrial capitalism.

Thomas Cook, precursor of tourist packages, a former Baptist pastor, was a religious man who believed that most Victorian social problems were related to alcohol, and that the lives of the people who work would be better if they drank less and became more educated. Enthusiastic about the rise of the railroads and with philanthropic goal, Thomas Cook booked a whole train in July 1841 and took about 500 passengers from Leicester to a meeting in Loughborough. After that, Cook left philanthropy, envisioned the rise of big business, and at the end of 1850 was taking thousands of British workers for the Great Exhibition in London. Thus, the embryo of what was later to become what is called the “mass tourism” was born, uniform and standardized as we currently know it.

Santos-Filho (2008) emphasizing the social aim of the development of Cook, says he developed a work of recovery of alcoholics and dared to undertake trips to popular social classes in villages believed to be the exclusive strongholds of the rich people from England. However there is no doubt that mass tourism is currently not accessible to most people, even in developed countries. Boyer (2003) in this sense states that most countries of the world remain a public not for tourism, even in the 3rd millennium, considering the tourist of today



searches for the exoticism of the privileged ones in the 19th century. According to Boyer, in essence, nothing has changed except the amount of tourists. The issue is to transport the masses, to lodge them, regulate their flow, get their attention, arise their desire, but not to renew tourism. Tourism in the 20th century hasn't changed the discourse, it strengthened the tourism development scheme which begins with the invention of the tourist spot, its diffusion by important personalities (in the beginning they were monarchs and the nobility, then, celebrities) and the appropriation of the models by the lower classes.

Boyer (2003) confirms the thesis that mass tourism has its beginnings in England and abandons the idea that the phenomenon started with the introduction of paid holidays in France in 1936. However, for Boyer mass tourism is one of the "inventions" of the 20th century, relying on a new social practice. With the subsequent development of capitalism, the marketing of packages and programmed trips also developed as a business. Tourism developed as capitalism developed in all areas of human life. For Coriolano (2006, p. 220), in the same way as the Fordist model had massified culture, school, communication, it also tried to massify tourism, making it reach the strategy of the mergers/acquisitions, the conglomerates and oligopolies that dominate its entire production chain, organizing production in a flexible way regarding work and the places.

Currently, however, the Fordist model of traveling is losing sense and space. Coriolano (2006, p. 45) explains that the post-Fordist phase of tourism takes place in the context of a society in which the services have priority over other sectors of the economy, when the business paradigm changes around customized products, quality, social and environmental sustainability, etc. and when it tries to establish the dynamics of flexible working.

This work deals indirectly with the relationship between tourism and poverty, both processes originated by the development of industrial capitalism, more precisely the process in which the landscape of poverty becomes tourist merchandise. The emergence of mass tourism in the Fordist production molds through the 'commodification' of tourism, that is, the creation of touristic goods, embodied in the tourist packages and in standardized hospitality offers. However, the hegemonic Fordist model is opening up space to new dynamics in tourism, inserted in a *liquid* or post-Fordist (post?) modernity, which seems

to be linked to the pursuit of belonging, security and authenticity, outside of the packages and international level hotels.

2. New dynamics in tourism consumption

Talaya (2004 apud RAMIRO, 2010, p. 65) shows that the behavior of the tourist has followed new trends bringing major changes, and the main ones are the most active and versatile entertainment, the search for experiences, fragmentation of the trips that are increasingly more frequent and shorter, more direct sales channels with the increasing use of the internet, greater demand for customized products defined by the very tourists, greater need for information, and segmenting markets and destinations. According to Ramiro (2010, p. 65) these characteristics imply greater interest in natural and culturally preserved environments, being enclosed in a conscious consumption movement that is strong especially in developed countries.

Thus, new travel demands arise: tourists who want to visit rural areas, natural spaces, communities or even poor and environmentally degraded urban spaces, such as the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. Tourism usually sells beautiful and admirable landscapes, however tourism in favelas differs because the landscape is not attractive for its beauty, but for its poverty and environmental degradation.

This paper addresses two of these new forms of touristic consumption which occur in the favelas environment: Communitarian tourism and the so-called favela-tour. The first one refers to communities that organize themselves to welcome tourists, the second one refers to the practice of tours in favelas in Rio de Janeiro and has no direct link with the local community.

The main objective of this article is to discuss the existence of two different types of tourism that occur in the “space-favela”, showing their major differences and their relationship with the local community and its environment. We also intend to discuss the placement of tourism as a “reduction,” “fight,” or “relief” factor of poverty.

Santos-Filho (2005; 2008) argues that tourism is a social phenomenon, but is the target of various kinds of prejudices within and outside the academy, still considered a subject that arises little interest for research and being considered of low relevance in the field of humanities until today. The author states that:

In daily life, the theme of tourism suffers the stereotype of being understood as an activity made exclusively to the wealthy social classes to travel. The term tourism suffers from a process of elitist understanding, masking an extremely unequal social reality that collaborates for it to be seen as unimpressive in public policies formulated by the Brazilian State, as well as by the Latin-American State (SANTOS-FILHO, 2005, p. 56).

Although suffering from a certain bias of academia in general, some other authors cast their eyes about changes in touristic activity and contribute to the advancement of another approach to tourism and leisure in the areas of humanities and social sciences. Santos-Filho proposes overcoming the neo positivist reading of the phenomenon of tourism and a new epistemology for historical-critical reading. Zaoual (2009) views the outbreak of an investigation field for new forms of tourism:

The investigation field on new forms of tourism is appropriate for a reading about the beliefs of the actors, producers and consumers, since it is about studying the metamorphosis of a certain number of intangible values into economic values (ZAOUAL, 2009, p. 56).

Regarding mass tourism, Zaoual (2009, p. 57) states that the note of the trends of world tourism demand allows for a perception that this type of production model of tourist services is worn out because it aims solely at profit and at large-scale production. The quoted author states that we live in a “crisis of paradigm and the classic tourism practices in general.” In this perspective, “a victim of its own success, mega-tourism thus seems to respond to the theory of products life-cycle” (ZAOUAL, 2009, p. 57). The author indicates that tourism has experienced the choking of the uniform, as we can learn from the following excerpt:

Fundamentally, it is in *diversity* that new tourist demand depletes its deepest motives. In a world plagued by loss of references, the need of belonging, as well as an inter-cultural exchange, expresses the desire for a sense search by the actors (ZAOUAL, 2009, p. 58).

Thus, according to Zaoual (2009, p. 59-60) the new consumers of tourism lead to a proliferation of new conceptions in the particular area of tourism: tourism of solidarity, inter-cultural tourism, nature tourism, ecotourism, durable tourism, proximity tourism, memory and history tourism, values tourism. Among these we can also place those mentioned earlier: locally-based (or community-based) tourism and tourism in the favelas.

The tourism that is practiced in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro is also the result of these new tourist demands, in which the space built under the oppression of poverty it is sold by packages of “receptive tourism.” About this process, Ouriques (2005, p. 56) states that it was the discovery of a new functionality of the favela, in which his “specific aesthetics becomes merchandise for tourist visitation.” In a critical and very well based perspective, Ouriques (2005, p. 56) explains that “the misery of men materialized in urban spaces by shacks and surviving environments without any equipment and utilities ends up having an aesthetic purpose, a tourist purpose” (2005, p. 56).

That is, it is virtually impossible not to recognize that the reality of tourism is changing. This move leaves the Fordist standards and points to a greater diversification of destinations and tourism opportunities. Either in rural, natural, or poor urban space, differentiated spaces of everyday life are the subject of curiosity and desire for tourist visitation. Among these new demands, of course, there are those that contribute more and the ones that contribute less for social development. Locally-based tourism organized by residents of favelas in this aspect differs from the favela-tour.

3. The need to place yourself in a fluid world

In the currently fluid modernity we live in, Bauman (2001) states that there are solids that are being melted down mainly due to those who weave the individual decisions and the designs and the collective actions. Feelings of belonging to groups such as family, class and neighborhood are broken down. According to the author, the modern life that is currently being built is an individualist, insecure and privatized version of modernity.

The author explains that insecurity affects everyone, as we are all immersed in a fluid and unpredictable world of deregulation, flexibility, competitiveness and uncertainty, feelings that we live in day to day life, at work, at school, on the streets, etc. Bauman (2005) explains that we were removed from our community's existence in the name of a freedom that proved too limited by insecurity. According to the author, the dilemma of security and freedom then runs through the community.

Thus it is necessary to emphasize that our understanding of community is that present in Coriolano and Silva (2005, p. 29), that studying communitarian tourism in the Northeast, they understand that community is:

a social group living in a small geographical area, whose integration of people with each other and with the place creates an identity so strong that both the inhabitants and the place are identified as place (CORIOLANO, SILVA, 2005, p. 29).

The tourism activity is influenced by this liquid modernity. Thus, contextualizing the changes of tourist activity, Zaoual (2009, p. 69) states that consumption for itself doesn't seem more important and the industrial competition society man is looking for the meaning of his existence. Thus, according to the author, the emergence of a "deep tourism" or a "situational tourism" based on new relations with the culture of the places and with the natural environment is one of the signs of industrial civilization crisis. The author also states that:

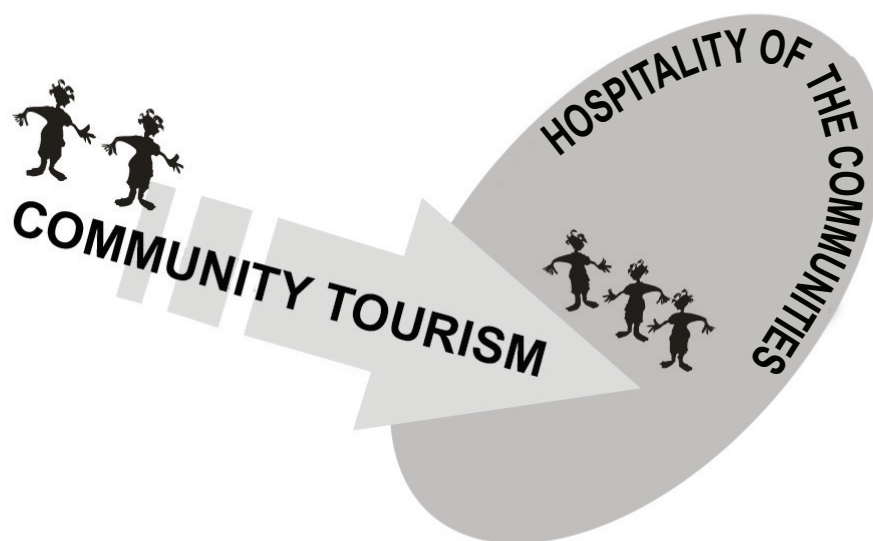
Non-located, modern man, the one from the economic competition society with all the cruel effects that we know, is also looking for cultural roots, biotypes and socio-relational niches likely to put him in harmony with himself and with the world around him. *Know thyself* from Aristotle acquires some consistency in this search of the citizens of an industrial society without direction (ZAOUAL, 2009, p. 70)

Thus, immersed in the daily lives of insecurity, they seek a contemporary sense of security in the communities (different from ancient forms of community agglomeration, a new kind of community). Similarly, new sensations are sought for in tourism, other than those of “live the feeling of not belonging”, since this feeling is already experienced in everyday life (BAUMAN, 1997). Currently, on the contrary, tourists seek for the sense of security, a sense of belonging, or even a sense of being located. If we live the “tourist syndrome” daily, as Bauman (1997) says, when we become tourists we need the opposite: security and belonging.

So, finally, communitarian tourism (CORIOLANO, 2009) is regarded as a tourist activity in which small communities (often poor, isolated and without economic alternatives) are protagonists of tourist enterprises, as community hostels, cooperative buggies, etc. welcoming those tourists who are eager for the sense of security and belonging.

4. Understanding the differences between communitarian tourism and Favela-Tour

The differences between the community and the favela-tour tourism is the community's participation in the production and distribution of the "product." While in the first one it is the community that decides what to show, in the second one it is shown by external social actors. The communitarian or community-based tourism, in conceptual terms, keeps local development relations, sustainability, solidarity, and belonging and, thus, would have greater probability of benefiting the community as opposed to the favela-tour, which is an activity performed by outsourced receptive tourism agencies whose involvement with the community is very small. A schematic illustration of the interaction that takes place within the framework of the community tourism, that is, the solidarity with the hospitality of the communities is as follows:



We realize that the community tourism projects supported by the Ministry of Tourism in Rio de Janeiro are, in their majority, projects developed in favelas. This led us to know the study of Freire-Medeiros (2009), who research the phenomenon of tourism practiced in favelas, bringing the construct of "poverty tourism", which refers to goods as all other contemporary capitalism goods (FREIRE-MEDEIROS, 2009, p. 151).



Initially, we have also questioned ourselves about the sense to address the favelas of Rio as communities. In fact, the word community in Rio de Janeiro has a different meaning from other regions, as it is used in the sense of “favela”. Thus, it is a somewhat stigmatized word, marked by a social condition of poverty and not always alludes to small places with few people where we find security and belonging.

On the contrary, the word community in Rio de Janeiro is related to violence and insecurity, but, despite that, as explains Freire-Medeiros (2009, p. 96-97), favela defines itself as a community due to its own mechanism of social exclusion to which they are subjected. According to the author, “the favela emerges as a self-sufficient territory, with its own culture, in which the inhabitants remain united in opposition to the selfish society around them.” Now, Gomes (2002, p. 15) analyzes the meaning given to the word community in Rio de Janeiro, where the term is used as an euphemism for ‘favela’, at times somewhat cynical. Gomes (2002, p. 15) states that:

Another discursive form widely used to refer to the people inhabiting the favela is the name of “community”. In fact, this category, which, at first glance, may seem nice because it gives a status of organized group and “harmony” to these people, in fact, acts as a reinforcement of the idea of exclusion, to the extent that differentiates these “communities” of a global urban society shaping the city (GOMES, 2002, p. 15).

Thus, the fact that the favela’s community expanded in function of marginalization outside pressure which *a priori* differences can be placed between the favela-tours and the TBC in communities in Rio? It’s easy to figure out that it is precisely is the role of the local people. Freire-Medeiros (2009, p. 118) points out that the favela-tour in Rocinha benefits a very specific and minor segment economically and does not promote effective distribution of profits, and the travel agency almost never establishes a dialog with the representative institutions of the location.

The question of whether the favela-tour brings some benefit to the communities in which they are performed or is it only about exploring others’ poverty in a touristic point of view then seems to be at least partially answered. The initiative of the Ministry of Tourism to support community touristic projects of interest located in Rio’s favelas reverses, in a way, this

distortion that occurs in the favela-tour, where the agencies from outside the community are the main beneficiaries of the activity.

Searching for ancillary data regarding tourism in favelas, we found the dissertation of Spampinato (2009), which analyzes 6 tourism initiatives that take place in Rio de Janeiro favelas: Rocinha favela-tours, eco-tours in Morro da Babilônia, the Favela Receptiva in Vila Canoas, The Maze Inn and Jazz in the favela (Tavares Bastos), the Museum of Favela - MUF (Cantagalo and Pavao-Pavãozinho) and the Forum of Tourism of Rocinha, seeking to contribute to the “knowledge of community-based tourism experiences (TBC) in the urban scope” (SPAMPINATO, 2009). The author comes to the conclusion that:

Among the tourism experiences in the favelas in Rio, however, there are also experiences that show the absence of the community, a mutual lack of knowledge between the tourist and the community, which causes a distancing/separation between the actors, and a deepening, or at least a confirmation of prejudices and of mutual misunderstanding, as in the case of favela-tours in Rocinha or The Maze in Tavares Bastos (SPAMPINATO, 2009, p. 145).

Thus, the author confirms that in some types of tourism developed in favelas, the absence of the community does not allow the desirable meeting of the tourist with residents, a more humane hospitality that creates social acknowledgment. As we want to show, the favela-tours which take place in Rocinha are part of experiences where the community is absent.

Now, Siqueira (2007), in his doctoral thesis, has the Urbanization Program of Sambaiaatuba Dam, in São Vicente - Santos, in the State of São Paulo in Brazil as his object of study. The author concluded that the urbanization of the favela should involve working with the “life plan of the place” and encompass citizen education, encouraging supportive economy and qualification for the labor market linked to tourism. The author considers the following principle:

that the proposals for the issue of favelas, under the view of tourism shall contain the full treatment of society and the territory towards the establishment of doors for the inclusion of the population in such areas, as well as including of physical and environmental aspects (SIQUEIRA, 2007, p. 214).



The author concluded that the inclusion of tourism as an alternative for income generation to the location studied should be based “on the promotion of citizenship and community organization, based in daily life and in the place” (SIQUEIRA, 2007, p. 224). Thus, we can see that the author comes to the same conclusion, since he also considers the involvement of local community organization important for the success of tourism in favelas. The “life plan of the place” must take ownership of the benefits of tourism, offering a hospitality that fosters the meeting between locals and tourists, providing a deeper experience.

The study of Machado (2007), in his dissertation, in turn, has the favela tourism held in poor communities in Rio de Janeiro as an object of study. The overall objective of the work is to describe the mechanisms and understand the scope and limits of this economic activity in the context of poor urban communities. From the point of view of Social Service, the author concluded in his work that tourism in Vila Canoas has been causing conflicts. In the words of the author:

this type of tourism, the way it is being explored, has emphasized the social conflicts existing in the community itself, such as: internal divisions between “established parts” and “outsiders”; power struggles for access and use of “territories”, institutions and/or social relations; gender divides, etc. (MACHADO, 2007, p. 77).

In conclusion, the author claims that in line with the other works cited, for the success of tourism in favela it is necessary to incorporate the residents of the communities visited. The author also identifies the need to change tourism in relation to their practices and content in the sense that Boyer (2003) proposes. Without citing this author, Machado considers that:



Favela tourism that is currently being developed needs to go through a process of change in relation to its practices and content. We are convinced that a receptive tourism, which could be held in poor communities of the city based on “other” values and criteria, can contribute to the local sustainable development of the communities visited. It is noteworthy that our concept of “sustainable development” is based on the premise of the appropriation of “intangible cultural heritage” by the community members in order to extract the contents to be exploited economically, especially to the community benefit itself (Fonseca, 2005). That is to say that we are convinced that the so-called “Favela tourism” has the potential to strengthen the self-esteem of the residents, contributing to the construction of a “positive” culture identity in the communities visited (MACHADO, 2007, p. 86-87).

Machado quotes the importance of the local sustainable development of the communities in which the intangible cultural heritage is used in order to obtain economic benefits. What is important is that the author highlights that tourism in the favela has a potential for the development of the location and in strengthening the self-esteem of the residents. Thus, we can see that several researches point to the question of the community when it comes to tourism in favelas.

TBC is one of the projects that are institutionally within the action scope “Structuring the Tourism in Prioritized Areas”, which in turn is part of the “Structuring Program of the Production Associated with Tourism” which is one of the branches of the Tourism Regionalization Macro program (National Tourism Plan 2007-2010 - A Journey of Inclusion) (<http://www.turismo.gov.br/>). The projects supported by the Ministry of Tourism in the city of Rio de Janeiro are the following:

- Vila Solidária project, located in the complexo da Maré and conducted by Ação Comunitária do Brasil (BARTHOLO; SANZOLO; BURSZTYN, p. 457-458);
- Tecendo Redes de Turismo Solidário Project, located in the favela of Cantagalo and conducted by the Associação das Costureiras Autônomas do Morro do Cantagalo (BARTHOLO; SANZOLO; BURSZTYN, p. 465-466);
- Turismo no Morrinho Project, located in the favela Vila Pereira da Silva (Laranjeiras neighborhood) and performed by the NGO Morrinho (BARTHOLO; SANZOLO; BURSZTYN, p. 467-468);

- Revive Paquetá Project, located on the island of Paquetá and held by the Casa de Artes Paquetá (BARTHOLO; SANZOLO; BURSZTYN, p. 462-464).

Thus, considering that 3 of the 4 TBC projects supported by the Ministry of Tourism in Rio de Janeiro were located in favelas and recovering the affirmation of Freire-Medeiros (2009) that the favela-tour held in Rocinha does not provide economic benefits to the location, we need to investigate the two forms of activity comparatively.

5. Final considerations

We know that the support of the Ministry of Tourism to TBC is a very important initiative and aligned to the goal of the National Plan for Tourism - a Journey of Inclusion, aimed at social inclusion development, deviating from the great projects based on the Fordist model of tourism. And until now this social objective of the PNT was only on paper, so support from TBC comes as a light at the end of the tunnel.

However, even though the TBC in the favelas can contribute to the existence of a new relationship between tourism and poverty, in which the communities are autonomous and really enjoy the profits generated by this quite controversial activity, we must bear in mind that poverty, as a social matter of modernity, inherent to capitalism, is worked out with universalist social policies based on the notion of law.

The Ministry of Tourism conducted a study financed by the World Bank, published in 2005, entitled “Turismo Sustentável e Alívio da Pobreza no Brasil: reflexões e perspectivas” (BRAZIL, 2005), where IT draws a project that would relate to the incorporation into federal policies of understanding tourism in the perspective of social inclusion and as an activity that can help reduce poverty, finding shelter in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). About this possibility Cruz (2006, p. 340-341) proposes some problematizations:



In the year 2005, the Ministry of Tourism of Brazil was involved in an international project aimed at discussing the possibilities of tourism to “alleviate poverty”; and about that the following considerations are made. If it is intended to “alleviate poverty” in Brazil through tourism (and I don’t intend to get here in a discussion about the relevance of the concept), a basic condition for the achievement of this objective concerns the provision, for the planning, of a deep poverty x-ray in the country and, in this case, once again the space arises as an imperative. As Alain Lipietz said in *O capital e seu espaço*, “there are no poor regions, but regions with poor people,” making a clear allusion to the spatial distribution of poverty whose full understanding can only be based on an in-depth analysis about its opposite, i.e., about the spatial distribution of wealth, on the territorial division of the work, “on the principles of what Marx and Trotsky called for a long time, “uneven and combined development” (Cruz, 2006, p. 340-341).

Cruz (2006) also states that poverty is an essentially structural social phenomenon that cannot be worked out without taking into account historical and spatial contexts. According to the author, citing the “Atlas of Social exclusion in Brazil”, by Márcio Pochmann and Ricardo Amorim, poverty is in all corners of Brazil, and that poverty is not endemic, its understanding goes necessarily through historical analysis. Cruz (2006) argues that:

If there is in theory any possibility of tourism contributing to “alleviate poverty”, then the planning of tourism as a tool for the achievement of this purpose should: 1) take ownership of the knowledge produced in the country concerning the spatial distribution of poverty, by locating it as well as diagnosing its profile (who are the poor people, where they live, how they live, what their main restrictions are, etc.); 2) diagnosing the causes of poverty in addition to obvious explanations, such as those that are restricted to structural issues (mode of production, distribution of income, distribution of wealth); need to know the regional specificities of poverty not to incur in error in order to produce a policy or a plan of action for the entire country, ignoring these particularities; 3) identifying any regional factors perpetuating poverty or difficulty to overcome in order to build a frame that ultimately allows for the evaluation of the possibilities of tourism contributing to overcome them. Given the stated above, there is a clear need for public tourism policies to integrate other



sectoral public policies, since the tourism activity is not estranged from a social, economic, and political context (Cruz, 2006, p. 341).

The neo-liberal vision financed by the World Bank, which encourages focused and sectorialized treatment of social problems such as poverty, if adopted in the framework of the Ministry of Tourism will meet the aspirations of those who act according to the disfigurement of the universalist social policy. The treatment of poverty through tourism can be understood as more of a problem management initiative, whose effects can be at most residual. In fact, if marking the favelas where there is any kind of tourism (either exogenous or community-based) on a map of Rio de Janeiro, we will see that most of them are in the southern part of the city, which can be in part explained by the fact that in some of the slabs of these favelas it is possible to see beautiful views of the ocean amidst the poverty. Apparently, there is almost no tourism in favelas of the North area or in the Baixada Fluminense (Rio de Janeiro Lowland), which shows the spatial limitation and also this kind of theoretical action on fighting poverty.

Although Cruz (2006) argues that tourism policy must be integrated with other sectoral policies, we think that as a strategy to fight poverty the TBC is very small when compared to other actions of the Ministry of Tourism. The action to support the TCB is the closest related to “the inclusion journey” that guided the current National Tourism Plan (BRAZIL, 2007), which was intended to bring the tourist activity to assist in the social development of the country. This strategy presents itself in the historical moment in which the perverse process of Americanization of social policies in Brazil is in place (WERNECK, 1998).

So, for now, we emphasize that the action to support the TBC from the Ministry of Tourism is important, since it brings out a new vision regarding tourism as a catalyst of social development and also about tourism in favelas and in poor areas. However, it does not contribute decisively not even to reduce or “relief” poverty in Brazil. The treatment and resolution of poverty should be the responsibility of the investment in universal social policies such as health, social assistance, education and sanitation.

As concluded by Coriolano (2006, p. 224), tourism cannot end poverty, but it can offer job opportunities, earnings, appreciation of popular culture and other opportunities to the poor people of the places where it develops, contributing to human-scale development and for a critical understanding



of the exclusionary capitalism. Communitarian tourism is only a “survival strategy” for the author with which the poor try to enter the production chain of tourism (CORIOLANO, 2006, p. 223).

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